

Message Text

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ACTION AID-59

INFO OCT-01 NEA-14 ISO-00 AGR-20 SWF-02 IGA-02 EB-11

COME-00 TRSE-00 OMB-01 CIEP-03 IO-14 EUR-25 FRB-03

L-03 CIAE-00 INR-11 NSAE-00 RSC-01 DODE-00 DRC-01

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R 261400Z JUL 74

FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6331

INFO AMEMBASSY RABAT

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RABAT FOR AG ATTACHE

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAID, TS

SUBJ: PL 480 TITLE I: GOT INTERESTED IN WHEAT PURCHASE

REF: TUNIS 3839

1. MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OFFICIAL INFORMED EMBOFF
JULY 19 THAT TUNISIA FACES DEFICIT OF 200,000-250,000
METRIC TONS OF WHEAT FOR 1974/75 AND HOPED PART OF NEED
(POSSIBLY AS MUCH AS 60,000 MT) COULD BE MET BY PL 480
TITLE I SALES. HE NOTED GOT HAD NOT RAISED MATTER IN
EARLIER CONVERSATIONS OR WHEN SOY BEAN OIL REQUEST MADE
(TUNIS 3839) BECAUSE OF UNCERTAINTY REGARDING 1973/74 WHEAT
CROP. HE SAID CROP NOW APPEARED TO BE FALLING SHORT OF
EXPECTATIONS AND CLEARLY COULD NOT MEET NEEDS. HE NOTED THAT
TUNISIA HAD IMPORTED 197,500 MT IN LAST CROP YEAR AND
THAT FAO HAD SET UMR FOR TUNISIA OF 108,000 MT IN 74/75.
IN ADDITION, GOT WILL ALSO OBTAIN 43,500 MT OF AID WHEAT
IN 74/75: 25,000 MT FROM FRANCE, 11,000 MT FROM CANADA,
AND 7,500 MT FROM EC (OUT OF 30,000 MT REQUESTED).

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2. MOFA OFFICIAL ADDED THAT BECAUSE OF CURRENT HIGH WORLD PRICE OF WHEAT, PURCHASE ON COMMERICAL TERMS OF REMAINDER OF NEEDS AFTER UMR AND AID WHEAT WOULD IMPOSE SERIOUS DRAIN ON TUNISIA'S FOREIGN EXCHANGE RESOURCES AND ON GOT BUDGET BECAUSE OF LARGE SUBSIDY PROVIDED IN ORDER MAINTAIN LOW DOMESTIC CONSUMER PRICE OF WHEAT PRODUCTS. HENCE GOT NEEDED TO OBTAIN ALL OR PART OF ADDITIONAL REQUIRED WHEAT ON CONCESSIONAL TERMS.

3. MOFA OFFICIAL SAID GOT WOULD PROVIDE COMPREHENSIVE SUPPLY AND DEMAND DATA (NOT YET AVAILABLE) TO SUPPORT OFFICIAL REQUEST FOR WHEAT WHICH WOULD BE SUBMITTED IN NEAR FUTURE. HE ASKED FOR INFORMAL USG REACTION TO THIS PRELIMINARY APPROACH FOR TITLE I WHEAT. HE ALSO EXPRESSED HOPE FOR FAVORABLE RESPONSE TO EARLIER REQUEST FOR SOYA BEAN OIL, NOTING THAT MEETING THIS NEED IN FULL IS IMPORTANT SINCE THIS WOULD RELEASE TUNISIAN FOREX WHICH COULD BE USED PURCHASE WHEAT COMMERCIALY. HE INDICATED GOT MIGHT REQUEST SMALL AMOUNT TITLE I FEED GRAINS BUT THIS NOT CERTAIN.

4. EMBOFF NON-COMMITTAL ON AVAILABILITY OF WHEAT BUT PROMISED PASS ON REQUEST AND INFORM HIS OF POSSIBILITIES AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

5. COMMENT: MINISTRY AGRICULTURE ESTIMATES THIS YEAR'S WHEAT CROP AT ABOUT 800,000 MT OR SLIGHTLY LESS THAN LAST YEAR'S CROP. EMBASSY/USAID AGREE THIS FIGURE PROBABLY REALISTIC. GIVEN FACT MINISTRY AGRICULTURE ALSO REPORTS 140,000 MT CARRYOVER AT END OF FY 1974, HOWEVER, IT APPEARS THAT UMR PURCHASES PLUS OTHER DONOR COMMITMENTS WILL MEET CONSUMPTION REQUIREMENTS. NEVERTHE LESS, DUE UNPREDICTABLE CLIMATIC CONDITIONS, PL 480 WHEAT SALE MAY BE ADVISABLE IN ORDER MAINTAIN ADEQUATE STOCK POSITION. EMBASSY/USAID WILL COMMENT FURTHER WHEN S/D TABLES SUBMITTED BY GOT.

6. ACTION REQUESTED: WOULD APPRECIATE PRELIMINARY INDICATION AS TO AVAILABILITY OF WHEAT UNDER TITLE I AS WELL AS RESPONSE TO EARLIER REQUEST FOR SOYBEAN OIL.
SEELYE

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Message Attributes

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